



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD AT THE BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM - TOWN HALL
AT 7PM, 13 MARCH 2017**

Present: Councillors Aitken (Chairman), Peach (Vice Chairman) Ayres, Bisby, Rush, Fower, Iqbal, Over, Saltmarsh and Dowson

Also Present: Liz Youngman, Education Co-opted Member

Cabinet

Member: Councillor Sam Smith, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Officers in Attendance: Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Corporate Director People and Communities

Gary Perkins, Assistant Director, Education

Lou Williams, Service Director for Children and Safeguarding

Karen S. Dunleavy, Democratic Services Officer

Joanna Morley, Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Shearman, Al Kingsley, and Parish Councillor Susie Lucas. Councillor Ayres attended as a substitute for Councillor Allen.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

Councillor Bisby declared an interest in items 6 and 7 due to his role as Chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee and his intention to speak on both items.

3. Minutes of Meeting Held on 5 January 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2017 were approved subject to them being amended to show that Councillors Saltmarsh, Over and Dowson were all present at the meeting on 5 January 2017.

4. Call In of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Key Officer Decisions

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

5. Educational Attainment: Validated Results Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4, Including Schools Causing Concern

The Assistant Director (Education) introduced the report which outlined the actions taken by officers of the Education Services Division of the People and Communities Directorate, and others, in response to the 2016 outcomes at Key Stage 2 (age 11) and Key Stage 4 (age 16)

The Assistant Director (Education) responded to comments and questions raised by Members and a discussion took place around the following points:

- Members had expected that the Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 results would be included in the report and had wanted more background information.

- As the meeting was much later in the year than normal to discuss validated results and because these results had already been supplied to the Committee and were in the Public domain, it was felt that the focus of the report would be on looking forward to the 2017 results rather than back to 2016.
- It was made very clear in the report that officers wanted to focus on what was being done to raise attainment and specifically what had been put in place since January 2017 of this year.
- There has been a real shift change in the attitude of head teachers and governors, particularly in Primary Schools, who having recognised that the results of last year were simply not good enough, were now working hard to improve performance.
- The validated results for KS2 had last been circulated in January 2017 but had not come before the Scrutiny Committee. At this late stage in the year when the next exams were shortly due to be taken the report focussed on what was being done to improve those results rather than looking back to the exams that had already been taken.
- Members were expecting more information so that the KS2 attainment figures could be fully scrutinised.
- The 2015/16 results were underwhelming, however, the KS2 data that had been shared in September 2016 was later validated and had improved results to a more reasonable level.
- The Officer reported that out of adversity had come strength and that a greater unity had been formed between schools and PCC officers; strategic partnerships had been formed and two reviews undertaken, all within a short space of time.
- Once a formal notice of improvement had been issued to a school, the school in question were required to produce a response and action plan. The action plan required approval by the Local Authority and would then be sent to the Regional School Commissioner and Ofsted.
- The Regional Schools Commissioner and Ofsted were not notified if a letter of concern had been sent to a school, however, a response and action plan were required in the same way as they were for schools that had been issued a formal notice.
- The improvement of reading in schools was being addressed by the use of Improving Phonics Outcome groups, Improving Reading Outcome schemes and the offer of support from the strategic partnership and Success For All scheme.
- It was national policy that those schools that were cause for concern were converted into academies as a standard course of action. Recently in some instances this change to academy status had not bought about the necessary improvements and in those cases further work was done with the Regional Schools Commissioner to overcome the issues.
- Members expressed concern about working with Cambridgeshire County Council as previous working relationships had been unsuccessful.
- The work with Cambridgeshire would not be a wholesale joining of services; instead it would be an exploratory enterprise which focussed on sharing strengths where they existed. It was intended to be a positive move that looked at evidence based improvements and which then shared that experience.
- Officers reported that there had been an admission by teachers that there had been too much focus on writing rather than reading but that it was being addressed in the current year.
- School advisors were still sent into schools that were in the process of becoming academies but maintained schools that were experiencing difficulties were prioritised.
- Application of a 125 year lease was a standard lease requirement for schools applying to become academies.
- Frustration was expressed by Members that the validated results had not been provided in January and appended to the report on Educational Attainment: Validated Results Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4, Including Schools Causing Concern. Members also stated that without the results there was nothing to benchmark against. It was suggested that improvement must be by school to school links and be ongoing rather than a response to

a set of results.

- Work into school improvements was an ongoing process and monitoring continued throughout the year. Officers were looking forward at this time and every school had been asked for their predictions for the 2016/17 year. Out of 54 schools asked for their predictions, 30 had responded. Twenty of those thirty schools had predicted at least a 15% improvement in reading attainment and 13 more than a 20% improvement. Of those yet to respond, it was expected that eight would be at the lower end of the improvement spectrum and 16 would be at the higher end, thus the overall skew would be upwards.
- The report was produced to give confidence to Committee members that moving forwards, positive, pro-active steps were being taken to address the poor KS2 attainment figures.
- Revisiting the attainment figures had a demoralising effect on teachers and affected recruitment.
- Every county in the country was experiencing difficulty in recruiting teachers and the problem was not just isolated to Peterborough.
- Where an academy was sponsored by an academy trust, external to Peterborough, and this was not performing as it should, there was potential to change this sponsor and this was what was meant by 'rebrokerage'.
- The Regional Director of HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectorate) felt that the contextual issues of students in Peterborough were not replicated in any other authority in the East of England. These contextual issues were;
 - The proportion of children with low attainment on entry
 - The proportion of children whose first language was not English
 - The proportion of children who came from a deprived or disadvantaged background.
- There was a hypothesis that the particular demography of Peterborough created barriers to improving attainment and that, unlike other Councils which may have shared some of the same factors, Peterborough experienced all of them at the same time. A review had been commissioned to find out what evidence there was to support this theory and to find out what impact these demographic contextual factors had in the classroom. Alongside this, a 'deep dive audit' was being undertaken by professional partners such as Newnham and the Eddison Trust. It was hoped that the findings from this review would show that the proposed educational restructure was fit for purpose and addressed the correct problems.
- Schools were not named individually in public meetings.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the contents of the report and recommended that the People and Communities Directorate leaders were supported in challenging and intervening in schools where performance caused concern.

The Committee also agreed that:

1. The Assistant Director, Education would circulate the data on validated results for KS2 and KS4 and provide further background information and tables; and
2. The Assistant Director of Education would provide members with clarification as to why a 125 year lease for school academy buildings was required.

6. Placement Strategy & Update on Implementation of Permanency Services

The Service Director for Children & Safeguarding introduced the report which provided information about the number of children and young people in care, the changes in characteristics of this group and the types of placements within which children and young people in care were living.

The Service Director for Children & Safeguarding responded to comments and questions raised by Members and a discussion took place around the following points:

- Peterborough City Council was about to embark on a new partnership with The Adolescent and Children's Trust (TACT) which would bring about other services and innovations to Peterborough.
- TACT were currently liaising with a charity called Pause which supported women who had experienced, or who were at risk of, repeat removals of children from their care. This support encouraged women to focus on caring for their existing children and resolving underlying issues before considering extending their family.
- The Council had discussed with TACT the need to increase the participation of children in such things as the Children in Care Council.
- Council staff who were already members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and who had transferred to TACT, would remain as Members of the LGPS scheme. The transfer of employees to TACT would happen when the new service went live on 1st April 2017.
- A significant proportion of children that left care often returned into the system again at some point. The Council wanted to make sure that these children were supported so that they could remain at home.
- Peterborough had a higher percentage of children aged 16-17 in care compared to national averages which was partly explained by the number of unaccompanied asylum seekers. In north western authorities there were no unaccompanied asylum seekers as it was only those authorities that were close to the ports that experienced this. Peterborough was part of the national dispersal scheme which meant that when numbers exceeded 34, the children were sent to different authorities.
- The largest group of children in care in Peterborough were from a White British background but the percentage was still lower than the national figures which suggested that other ethnic groups would be slightly over represented. The Council needed to make sure that people from these communities were made aware of the help that was available from the Authority and partner agencies.
- Concern was expressed by some Members about the duplication of reports that appeared before the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate Parenting Committee.
- The Children in Care placements budget was around £13 million and therefore was a very big undertaking for the Council, which both Committees held a responsibility to review.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the contents of the report and sought an updated report on children in care in 12 months' time which would provide an opportunity for information to be presented on the impact of the new Permanency Service

The Committee also agreed that:

1. The Service Director for Children and Safeguarding would ensure that graphical data outlining the age profile for children in care and the Rate of Children and Young People in Care, be a consistent colour for the Peterborough data in future reports;
2. The Service Director for Children and Safeguarding would undertake a review of the information presented to both the Corporate Parenting Committee and the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of information where appropriate.

7. Review of Progress Against Action Plan Following Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services, 2015 and Plans Moving Forward

The Service Director for Children and Safeguarding introduced the report which provided the Committee with the opportunity to comment on and question the progress made against the action plan following the Ofsted inspection of Children's Services in 2015. A summary of responses included:

- The Council were confident that they would be successful in their bid for innovation funding from the department of Education and would therefore be able to develop the Family Safeguarding approach.
- Considerable investment had been made into upgrading the client database used in Children's Social Care (Liquid Logic) to the most recent version and the purchase of additional software (Business Objects and ClickView) which would enable the display of information extracted from Liquid Logic to be displayed in performance dashboards. These performance dashboards would make information much more accessible. There had however been some ongoing issues with Click View because of where it was located on the server, but it was hoped that the issues would be resolved in a timely manner.
- The total costs of the server, purchasing the software licences and upgrade costs had been approximately £200,000.
- Children's Services had requested a budget from the Corporate Management Team to double the number of personal advisers. The increased number of personal advisors would be sufficient to deal with the implications from the change of age for care leavers increasing from 21 to 25.
- Committee Members identified that all Councillors needed to know more about virtual schools; what it was and if there was an issue in their ward where they would report this to. A request had been made for this information to be shared at All Party Policy.
- As part of the changes that were being made in the Education Team, reports would be made available on Children in Care so that for example a list of children taking their GCSE's could be accessed by Councillors, who, in their roles as Corporate Parents, could wish the children good luck.
- The majority of personnel that formed the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), including those from partner agencies, were based at Godmanchester. It had been decided to move the Peterborough MASH team to Godmanchester so that everyone was together in a single location and so that all partner services linked up.
- The average social worker case load in Peterborough was 20. If that was reduced to 12-15 as was the case in most of the local authorities that achieved an overall Ofsted inspection of 'good', then significant additional resources would be required and good, qualified social workers were very difficult to recruit.

ACTIONS AGREED:

Committee Members noted the contents of the report and recommended that a further report on the progress of the new multi-disciplinary approach to meeting the needs of children, young people and their families with complex needs, be brought before the Committee in 12 months' time.

8. Forward Plan of Executive Decisions

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and requested further information on the following Executive Decisions:

- Academy Conversion – KEY/20FEB17/05
- Children's Centre Services – KEY/06MAR17/06

9. Draft Work Programme 2017/18

The Committee considered the draft work programme 2017/18 and it was agreed that items would be highlighted at the work programming meeting scheduled for the new municipal year 2017/18.

CHAIRMAN
7.00 – 8.30pm